श्री दिनेश गोस्वामी : वाजपेयी जी को सोने की क्या जरूरत है।... (व्यवधान)

श्री अमित शास्त्री : माननीय सदस्य जी का सुझाव बड़ा अच्छा है और इस पर हम लोग ध्यान देंगे।

SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Without making availability of gold for goldsmiths, a lot of trouble has come after this abolition. Will the Government consider forming co-operative societies of goldsmiths and supplying their requirements of gold through the Reserve Bank?

SHRI ANIL SHASTRI: I would like to inform the Member that this could be considered.

SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATRAMAN : I want to know whether measures have been taken to revise the Excise law with regard to smuggling after gold control has been abolished.

SHRI ANIL SHASTRI: All-out efforts have been made by the Government to ensure that smuggling is reduced and the Customs Act, the Excise Act and various other Acts provide for curbing such smuggling.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

*130. [*The questioner (Shri Mentay Padmanabham) was absent. For answer* vide *Col.* 44 infra]

Increase in the price of Aluminium

*131. SHRI MOHD. KHALEELUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item published in the Financial Express of 15th April, 1990 under the caption 'Major upswing in Aluminium prices' to the effect that prices of Aluminium have shot up by a margin of Rs. 2000 to Rs. 3000 in the post few days in South India;

(b) if so, what is the percentage increase anticipated by the dealers and users of the commodity and the actual increase thereof;

(c) what is the estimated artificial shortage created during that last three months;

(d) whether Government have enquired into the part played in this regard by NALCO, HINDALCO and BALCO; and

(e) if the answer to part (d) above be in the negative, what are the reasons therefor and by when it is likely to be instituted?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL & MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI): (a) Various newspapers have carried news items regarding the recent increase in prices of primary aluminium by the producers.

(b) There is no price control of aluminium since 1-3-1989; the prices at which metal is available to dealers and consumers are determined by market forces.

(c) There is no shortage of aluminium metal. The country is surplus in aluminium.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

SHRI MOHD. KHALEELUR RAHMAN: Sir, in a quiet move, the aluminium producers have hiked up the basic price of the metal by as much as Rs. 2000 per tonne. According to the latest price revision, the price of CG ingots has gone up from Rs. 31,750 to Rs. 33,750 per tonne. Similarly, the price of CG rods has moved up to Rs. 33,450 per tonne. It is said that the major beneficiary of

the new price structure is HINDALCO whose cost of production per tonne is the lowest in the industry. I, therefore, asked the hon. Minister, what are the reasons for rise of prices of aluminium, whereas the steel industry has reduced it?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Sir, as I have informed the hon. Members while replying to the original question, there is no price control today in aluminium. Earlier there was price control because there was a gap between the demand and supply. The supply position of aluminium improved and the alumiuium industry was in a position to meet the demand. In 1988-89, 15000 tonnes of aluminium was exported by NALCO. Therefore, in the Budget speech of the Finance Minister, in 1989, he announced that the price control would be removed and the price control was removed. Before the price control was remove, the controlled price was Rs. 35000/- to Rs. 36000/- including excise duty etc. The open-market price had a Premium of about Rs. 10000/-. After decontrol, the price in the open market came down. But it is a fact that the price, after decontrol, has been raised twice by about Rs. 2000/- each. The producers' justification was that the first time it had become necessary because of coal and freight increase. The second time it was necessary because of freight and increase in the prices of petroleum products and inputs. Now, it is a decontrolled item. Therefore, the market forces would determine the prices. We do not come into the picture at all.

SHRI MOHD. KHALEELUR RAHMAN: Sir, now I put my second supplementary. Is it a fact that the aluminium industry has been requesting the Government to ban the import of aluminium as there is a surplus of over one lakh tonnes in the domestic market? If so, what are the reasons for not banning the import?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: The aluminium prices in the international market came down at some point of time. The aluminium industry is making different types of representations to out. Imports of aluminium have been removed from OGL to limited permissible imports list.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Sir, I think that only a few months back it was brought out in the Board of Trade meeting that there was shortage of aluminium for small scale industry and that there was tremendous potential for export if we want to earn foreign exchange. Is the hon. Minister aware that a company by name HINDALCO has applied for permission to increase their capacity so that they can export more and also meet the requirements of small scale industries at lower prices? This application has been help of for more than two years. Would he like to push this application?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Well, since he has asked me, I will look into this application. The application will be pushed.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: When will you look into it?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Well, I have not been here for two years. I am not saying that whatever they have asked for will be agreed to. I will look into it. I can assure him that he will not have a second opportunity to ask about it.

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: I want to know specifically that as a result of decontrol of alumimium what is the benefit per year that the private sector company, HINDALCO, has got. There are two other public sector companies. What is

the benefit that HINDALCO has got as a result of decontrol of aluminium?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: I will not be able to give the figure to the hon. Member because that will depend upon their producion costs etc.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Have they derived more benefit than the two public sector companies?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Presently, the price of INDALCO is Rs. 35,400/- and the price of BALCO is Rs. 35,450/- in respect of wire rods. Therefore, one cannot say anything price-wise. It will depend upon production.

श्री प्रमोद महाजन: सभापति जी, नल्को, बाल्को और हिंडाल्को, इन तीन कंपनियों में निर्माण की लागत सबसे कम खर्च में, सबसे कम लागत में एल्युमिनियम कौन बनाता है ? अगर हिंडाल्को बनाता है तो यह जो दो सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र में है नाल्को और बाल्को, ये क्यों नहीं बना पाते हैं ? इसके क्या कारण हैं ? क्या सरकार इस दृष्टि से विचार करेगी कि इन दोनों में किस कारण से यह नहीं हो पा रहा है ?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Sir, it is very difficult to compare the cost of production and bring it in equal terms between a private sector company and a public sector corporation. And there are obvious limitations to a public sector corporation in terms of wage structure, benefits to employees, and various other factors. And, therefore, there may be a difference between the cost of production...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Import of soft drink manufacturing Machinery by Voltas

*122. SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA:
SHRI DIPEN GHOSH:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Voltas or its affiliate had applied in 1989 to the Joint Controller of Imports and Exports for endorsing the import of soft drink manufacturing machinery against R E P licences;

(b) if so, what is the value of the soft drink machinery to be imported;

(c) whether it is also a fact that more than one such application was made since the total value of imports exceeded rupees one crore; and

(d) if so, what action has been taken or is proposed to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND TOURISM (SHRI ARUN KUMAR NEHRU): (a) Yes, Sir. M/s. Voltas Limited, Bombay, had made two applications in 1989, to the Joint Chief Controller of Imports & Exports, Bombay, for import of soft drink manufacturing machinery against REP Licenses.

(b) and (c) The values of machinery to be imported against the two applications were as follows:—

(i) Rs. 83,87,899/-

(ii) Rs. 59,50,358/-

(d) Against the surrender of equivalent values of REP licences, two Import Licences were issued in favour of M/s. Voltas Limited, Bombay, for Rs. 83,87,899/- and Rs. 59.50.358/